ABSTRACT

of the dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in educational program «8D03101- Sociology» Tauyekelova Tolganay Batyrbekovna «The mutual influence of social responsibility and trust on the development of Kazakhstan business in modern conditions»

The general description of the dissertation. The dissertation is focused on a comprehensive study of the mutual influence of social responsibility and trust on the development of Kazakhstani business in the current context. This research is dedicated to the in-depth analysis of social responsibility and trust as key institutional factors that determine the sustainable development of Kazakhstani business under conditions of ongoing socio-economic transformation. Within the framework of the study, the theoretical and methodological foundations of the mutual influence of the social responsibility of business entities and the level of public, institutional, and interorganizational trust are examined, as well as their practical significance in forming a competitive, sustainable, and socially oriented business environment. The analysis considers the specific features of the national context, including cultural, institutional, and regulatory factors that influence the nature and dynamics of these processes in Kazakhstan.

The relevance of the research is determined by several theoretical and practical factors. Firstly, in recent years, global transformations occurring in Kazakhstan have led to significant changes in the political, social, and economic conditions that affect the viability and development of Kazakhstani business. Secondly, under conditions of global economic instability and uncertainty, the importance of intangible factors such as social responsibility and public trust is increasing in ensuring the resilience of entrepreneurial activity. Kazakhstan is undergoing institutional changes aimed at modernizing the economic system, introducing ESG principles, and forming a socially oriented business model. These processes require an in-depth scientific examination of the interconnection between the concepts of social responsibility and trust, as well as the adaptation of international best practices to the national context. Thirdly, the limited scholarly attention given to the mutual influence of social responsibility and trust within the domestic entrepreneurial environment, along with the scarcity of empirical data, underscores the need for comprehensive scientific research in this area. These prerequisites emphasize the scientific and applied significance of the dissertation topic and further justify the relevance of the research. Fourthly, it has become evident over time that corporate social responsibility in Kazakhstan must be implemented as a response to the urgent need to address pressing social issues in society. Despite the sustained academic interest in the phenomenon of social responsibility within Kazakhstani scholarship, there is still no unified perspective on its core characteristics, or on the factors and conditions for the development of social responsibility in Kazakhstani business. This can be attributed to the fact that the issue of the mutual influence of social responsibility and trust on business development has not yet been

sufficiently studied within the framework of Kazakhstani sociology, and there remains a lack of scientific research and scholarly work on this topic. This study focuses specifically on small businesses in Kazakhstan**.**

The subject of the study is the sociological analysis of the mutual influence of social responsibility and trust on the development of contemporary Kazakhstani business.

The object of the study is contemporary Kazakhstani business.

The purpose of the study is to explore the specific features of improving the effectiveness of corporate social responsibility and trust, based on empirical sociological research among small business representatives.

The purpose of the dissertation requires to solve the following tasks:

1. to systematically analyze the contemporary theoretical and methodological concepts of social responsibility and trust, and to determine their meaning and evolution based on recent scholarly developments.
2. to study the formation of the mutual influence between social responsibility and trust in the development of Kazakhstani business, considering the national, institutional, and cultural context.
3. to identify small business actors' perceptions of social responsibility and trust, and to systematize the ways in which these concepts are understood across various economic sectors.
4. to determine the motivation factors that encourage small businesses to implement practices of social responsibility, as well as the barriers that hinder their adoption.
5. to analyze the impact of social and charitable programs in the Republic of Kazakhstan on the formation and development of corporate social responsibility in business.
6. to classify the main problems and limitations faced by small businesses in implementing corporate social responsibility, and to propose solutions to address them.
7. to empirically explore the mutual influence of social responsibility and trust in the development of small businesses in Kazakhstan, to assess their contribution to the socio-economic development of society, to determine the interconnection of these factors through sociological analysis, and, based on the findings, to draw conclusions and develop recommendations aimed at enhancing business sustainability and competitiveness.

Scientific hypotheses:

1. Although business representatives are generally aware of the basic requirements of social responsibility standards, most entrepreneurial entities tend to disregard these requirements in practice or fulfill them only formally, due to economic and institutional factors.
2. The level of public trust in business is still at a low level. This is caused by the ineffectiveness of modern trust-building mechanisms, such as insufficient transparency in corporate governance, the lack of adherence to ethical standards, and the inadequate implementation of communication strategies.

3. The practice of corporate social responsibility in Kazakhstan's small business sector is often conducted in a formalistic manner and primarily oriented toward meeting the expectations and requirements of government authorities. This limits its potential to become a factor of sustainable development and to foster long-term relationships with society.

Theoretical and methodological basis of the study is drawing on theories and concepts proposed by leading foreign and national researchers. Given the complexity of the research object, a wide range of methods for the comprehensive analysis of socio-cultural and socio-historical phenomena were employed. To conduct an in-depth study of the mutual influence between social responsibility and trust on the development of Kazakhstani business in the current context, and to gain a deeper understanding of the factors affecting this process, the following theoretical approaches were analyzed: structural-functional analysis, systems analysis, rational choice theory, network approach, and the theory of social capital.

In defining the essence of corporate social responsibility, the research draws on the following conceptual frameworks: the theory of corporate egoism, the stakeholder theory, Carroll's pyramid of corporate social responsibility, the triple bottom line theory, the theory of sustainable development, the theory of sustainable competitiveness, and the ESG concept.

Scientific novelty of the study. In accordance with the aims and objectives of the study, the scientific novelty is reflected in the following directions:

1. For the first time in Kazakhstani academic discourse, a comprehensive theoretical and methodological analysis of the impact of social responsibility and trust on business development has been conducted. The study integrates contemporary foreign and domestic theories and adapts them to the socio-economic context of Kazakhstan. As a result, a theoretical and methodological foundation has been developed that reflects the specific features of the national entrepreneurial environment and the country's social development.

2. The formation and functioning of the mutual influence of social responsibility and trust in the development of Kazakhstani business has been thoroughly studied through empirical methods. It was found that the implementation of social responsibility practices is characterized by a prioritization of economic efficiency and tools that ensure the long-term sustainability of enterprises. This demonstrates the compatibility of social and economic objectives. Various aspects of small business actors' perceptions of social responsibility and trust have been identified and systematized.

3. Based on empirical research, the diverse motivations behind the implementation of corporate social responsibility among small businesses were identified. This highlights the need for differentiated approaches to promoting and supporting corporate social responsibility across various business segments.

4. The significant role of Kazakhstan's social and charitable programs in encouraging small businesses to engage in socially responsible practices was evaluated. These programs contribute to the development of partnerships between the state and business in the field of social development. The sociological research

identified key barriers to corporate social responsibility development among small businesses, which were analyzed from the perspective of both internal and external factors. This serves as a foundation for developing effective mechanism to support socially responsible entrepreneurship.

5. Model of corporate social responsibility in small business was developed with consideration of Kazakhstan's context. These models are based on theoretical foundations and empirical data and are aimed at enhancing sustainable development strategies and improving the social effectiveness of entrepreneurial activity.

6. The mutual influence of social responsibility and trust on the development of Kazakhstani business was examined empirically, and its impact on societal development was substantiated through theoretical and sociological research. Based on the research findings, concrete recommendations were developed to strengthen social responsibility and trust, contributing to the advancement of sustainable and socially oriented entrepreneurship.

7. The study offers a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the interrelation between social responsibility and trust, making a significant contribution to the development of theoretically and practically relevant solutions and recommendations aimed at ensuring the sustainable development of Kazakhstani business. This provides an opportunity to effectively support entrepreneurship from the perspective of social responsibility during Kazakhstan’s socio-economic modernization.

The main statements submitted for defense:

1. Representatives of small businesses perceive corporate social responsibility as a multi-level and multifaceted phenomenon. It includes not only mandatory obligations but also voluntary aspects. This comprehensive view aligns with contemporary approaches to understanding the interrelationship between business and society.

2. The results of the empirical research revealed the multidimensional nature of small business owners’ attitudes toward corporate social responsibility in Kazakhstan. According to the collected data, the most prominent forms of corporate social responsibility are the protection of employees and timely payment of wages (42.4%).

3. Motivation for corporate social responsibility among small businesses in Kazakhstan is largely voluntary and stems from entrepreneurs’ desire to actively contribute to the resolution of socially significant issues. The study identified a variety of motivational factors influencing engagement in corporate social responsibility, including humanistic motivation (e.g., altruism); religious and spiritual reasons; national and traditional values; pragmatic considerations. This diversity of motivations highlights the complexity of socially responsible business behavior and its adaptability to varying social demands and cultural contexts.

4. Small business representatives tend to view corporate social responsibility not in terms of isolated types (legal, economic, ethical, or philanthropic), but as an integrated whole. However, a pragmatic approach prevails, which is associated with low levels of institutional trust, weak regulatory frameworks, and limited social capital. In this context, the main emphasis is placed on ensuring economic stability, while spiritual and political aspects are perceived as secondary.

5. The role of trust in the business environment. The analysis identified several levels of trust: internal trust, interpersonal trust, collective trust, and public trust. It was established that high levels of individual and collective trust contribute to a range of positive outcomes, including increased employee motivation, improved staff retention, and growth in both productivity and creative capacity.

6. In the process of institutionalizing social responsibility, respondents placed particular emphasis on public attitudes aimed at raising civic awareness and independent thinking, as well as on the moral character of the individual. However, current government social and charitable programs are not seen as effective incentives for small businesses to actively engage in corporate social responsibility. Therefore, concrete measures are needed to improve social partnership between the state and the business sector.

7. Providing support to the social and economic spheres of society was identified as a key direction of corporate social responsibility. Entrepreneurs tend to voluntarily engage in addressing social issues. According to the research findings, they prioritize economic stability, while giving less importance to spiritual and political domains. Government social and charitable programs in Kazakhstan are not sufficiently effective in motivating small businesses to participate in corporate social responsibility, which highlights the need to strengthen social partnership between the state and business.

Empirical Basis of the Research

The dissertation research was conducted between 2022 and 2024 with the approval of the Local Ethics Committee of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (IRB-A365, December 30, 2021). The sociological study, which combined both quantitative and qualitative methods, made it possible to explore the research problem in a comprehensive manner and to enhance the reliability and accuracy of the findings. The methodological approaches complemented one another and contributed to a deeper understanding of behavioral and motivational aspects within the entrepreneurial environment.

The structure and scope of the dissertation are determined by the research objectives and internal logic of the study. The dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters (with nine subsections), a conclusion, a list of references, and appendices.